



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0444CA-1 for Greenfield Union Elementary School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In Section A. Vision, the applicant offers a candid appraisal of the current challenges facing the Greenfield Union School District. It is admirable that the rural district has managed to utilize their limited resources in order to maximize school infrastructure, personnel, instructional capacities, student services, and the challenges of continuous improvement. The applicant was able to articulate that high number of culturally and linguistically diverse students (75% of students) offer special challenges to LEA's in rural settings, particularly two student groups whose culture has no written language. Also compelling in the narrative was the district's challenge that 100% of the students are economically disadvantaged. The goals of the project as articulated in the vision narrative are ambitious yet realistic.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In Section (A)(2) the data reinforced a student population that is high need and brings specific challenges with them to school. The applicant described the necessity of having all schools participate. It was less clear as to why the applicant selected student grades 2-8 and the proposal would have been strengthened by a description of the LEA's comprehensive, K-12 approach to implementation of the proposal and why grades 2-8 were selected and might have more likelihood of closing the achievement gap than other grades.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application would be strengthened by additional information in the context of activities and strategies to meet students' personal needs both "academically and social-emotionally" as stated in section (A)(3)(B) The narrative describes that the funds are needed to continue "the initiative" but it was unclear exactly what the initiative provided. One current district activity is the occurrence of "Data Chats", wherein educational teams hold personalized student dialogs and the proposal would have been enhanced by describing the ways student data was driving professional development. An example of how a particular data trend was linked to professional development initiatives in a building would provide evidence that the LEA has the capacity to scale-up an existing infrastructure if additional funds were provided. The application would also be strengthened by a more detailed explanation of a district-wide, cohesive plan that provides a model for K-12 focus, across the district, and involves a highly organized and flexible system geared towards California state standards. The applicant does mention data based "system" but it was unclear how the current system was structured district-wide, and what structures, activities, strategies, and attributes contribute to fulfilling the obligations of the system, building by building, grade by grade, and classroom by classroom. The applicant needs to provide information on how a personal learning environment fits into the current K-12 curriculum. A district organizational chart or graphic depicting district goals for improving academic achievement might have proven the existence of a current infrastructure.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In Section (A)(4) The applicant makes a strong argument for the the need to decrease the achievement gaps between English</p>		

Learners and English Only and Proficient Students. What remains unclear is the district program model for teaching EL's in the district. The section would have been strengthened by evidence that the proposed curriculum supplementation of Phonemic awareness, Phonics, "Site words (SIPPS)", and software will programmatically and specifically support EL students. Phonemic awareness is difficult for ELLs because they may not yet have enough experience with English to be able to distinguish sounds that differ from those of their native language. The applicant did not make clear how differentiation and strategies for language development would scale up in each grade band and content area district-wide.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: In Section (B)(1), Greenfield is to be commended for the gains they have made district-wide on the California English Language Development Test. The applicant provides a link between the "use of counselors" and better student behavior and test performance. This section would be strengthened by a description of the approach to services and strategies being used by the counselors. Counseling services data could determine activities that were successful, frequency of student visits to the counselor, and a research base depicting optimum student-counselor ratios. Another asset to this section would be information that quantifies the perceived link between counseling services, use of specific materials and resources, and their link to academic achievement. The Table provided in Section (B)(1) labeled "Greenfield Union School District Academic Performance Index Results" would have been more valuable with a description of what the index measured. The narrative below the table indicated that "schools where grant strategies have been implemented are having significant gains." It is unclear what those "grant strategies" are, what is happening in "grant schools" that is not happening in the two schools that did not participate. Explicit explanation of current best practices would provide evidence as to what is advancing learning and could be scaled up to include all schools.		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: In Section (B)(2) The applicant offers evidence of a high level of transparency in the expenditures of the district and describes numerous avenues for information dissemination available to community stakeholders.		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	4
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: In Section (B)(3) the applicant describes a strong relationship between the LEA and the State, through the assignment of a State Trustee due to academic issues in the district. The narrative provided depicts a State assigned Trustee who worked tirelessly for two years to reform the academic initiatives and fiscal stability. The applicant does not offer specific details on the strength of the district now that they are operating autonomously from the state.		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: In section (B)(4) the applicant provides evidence of a letter from the SEA supporting Greenfield's application for RTTT-D funds. The narrative provided a description of the proposal's pathway to completion with input opportunities from students, parents, teachers, union leaders, and service providers. It was unclear as to whether or not 70 percent of teachers from participating schools supported the proposal or if the district has collective bargaining representation. The proposal would have been strengthened by clarification of this required process.		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	0
(B)(5) Reviewer Comments: In Section (B)(5), Analysis of needs and gaps, the situational context for the proposal is offered, but a high quality plan for analysis of the district's current status as well as the logic behind the reform goals is not as clear. Successful integration of a high quality plan requires a roadmap that is more clearly articulated, measurable and attainable, and individual roles must be		

clearly defined. It is noted that the district's past efforts that included a "combination of personalized computer assisted learning, goal setting through counselors, and teacher coaching" forms a great foundation from which to begin planning. The application lacks clarity in a detailed approach to the aforementioned pathway to success. For example, in the area of computer assisted learning, specific, research-based strategies could include: Daily, small group instruction in biography driven vocabulary strategies. Computer instruction could include comprehension strategies in combination with native language support, bilingual software for newcomers, and weekly formative assessments. The applicants' desire for goal setting through the counselors might highlight how the counselors will differentiate the needs of elementary students and secondary students. Counselors may need a structure to plan the optimum class schedules and to assess how a web of support services and a plan for extended years of school enrollment may be the best chance of graduation. Students who enter Greenfield lacking skills in a written language may require intensive academic intervention and specific support services concurrent with their academic program, with individual attention from a specialist cross-trained in ELL methods and literacy. Too often, schools label these students by their lack of English and not by their actual individual learning needs. A more detailed scope and sequence of a reformed academic pathway for ELs to propel them towards incremental and increasing school success would strengthen the proposal.

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In Section (C)(1) the applicant offers four areas for reform: reading preparation, helping students master the California State Standards, additional counseling services, and targeted technology training for middle school students. Data will be tracked and disseminated to students and parents. Each of the four areas for targeted reform offer a framework for success. What is unclear are the specific and systematic details within each target area for capacity-building reform.</p> <p>An example of reform for the first area, reading preparation, might include curriculum mapping from K-12 to ensure alignment of texts, software, approaches and strategies, scope and sequence. Perhaps this systemic approach exists, but the details are unclear in the narrative. While DIBELS is a reliable assessment, it is only one measure of progress. What is also unclear is how DIBELS is being utilized to inform a personalized approach to planning and instruction as required in the invitation.</p> <p>An example of reform for the second focus, helping students master the California State Standards, might be to determine a systematic approach for pre-teaching academic vocabulary of the standards, K-12, but with additional interventions in grades 2-8. At the district curriculum level, a detailed, long-term plan for professional development and other top-down decisions can drive site-level school improvement plans and professional development efforts. PLC's or other avenues could be utilized for advancing teachers towards their own goals. The proposal was unclear on how articulated instructional planning acts as the nexus between theory and implementation, and at what point individual student objectives and action steps defined in these plans become embedded in the student's use of individual technology.</p> <p>This section of the proposal lacked a detailed, systemic approach to reform efforts among every part of the education system K-12. It is unclear if the district utilizes systems thinking for the different aspects of the district (e.g. early childhood, food services, counseling, etc.) The four areas of the proposal's vision remain clear, but each area needs to be much more robust. Just as the instruction in the district is data-driven, the proposal is informed by lots of detail and data.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In Section (C)(2), current data protocols were provided. What is unclear from the protocols provided is how they are differentiated for EL's in the classroom. For example, Vista Verde Middle School Data Analysis Team Meeting form does not offer any boxes or lines to reflect if the students assessed are EL's and if they are, what their level of English language acquisition is. The Vista Verde Middle School Individual Planning for the Next Instructional Period form also needs to reflect built-in cultural competencies for EL students, such as level of English language acquisition. A space on the form for Spanish cognates for key academic vocabulary would be helpful and a student-biography component or building background component might provide more of a student-centered approach for EL students.</p>		

## D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: In Section (D)(1) The applicant begins the narrative with the school leadership team. The project will have a Race To The Top Director, but it remains unclear as to how the LEA central office will provide support for the project. At the building level, the applicant includes a Differentiated Learning Coach that will "organize and participate in peer observations for teachers. It is vague how the peer instructions might be designed, if substitute teachers would be needed, if there will be job-imbedded professional development, grade band teaming or individualized peer coaching. If the Differentiated Learning Coach is to work with the teachers, the technology support personnel, and the counselors, it may be difficult to hire personnel with all three content strengths, particularly who will come to a rural area. The project would be stronger if this type of challenge was noted and strategies for overcoming them were detailed. The applicant states in Section (D)(1) that the "students will be allowed to progress through the standards at their own pace" but does not offer details of how this objective will be achieved. This section could be strengthened by a more detailed plan, particular in the area of monitoring student progress and providing opportunities for demonstrating mastery in multiple ways.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: In section (D), the applicant indicated that initiatives would be implemented during the regular school day to ensure equal access for all targeted students. However, it remains vague how the LEA and school infrastructure would ensure an open data format, and allow parents and students to export information in an open data format. Developing a plan for using technology to support education reform means more than providing for the acquisition of computers and software. To be successful, a technology plan must promote meaningful learning and collaboration, and assurances that parents and stakeholders also have access to data data and information systems. It is a tool for improving--and ultimately, transforming--teaching and learning at school and at home. To accomplish that job, specific details on stakeholder technical support would strengthen the proposal.		

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: In section (E)(1) the applicant provides a rigorous plan that includes details for a theoretical framework for professional development and a strong cycle of implementation and monitoring of teacher observation, evaluation and feedback. The project would have been strengthened by the same amount of detail in the context of other aspects of the plan. For example, a major portion of the proposal is technology. Continuous improvement for the technology and software could have multiple measures for assessing the implementation and goals for individual students. Examples of evaluation measures could include the number of computers in school classrooms, the number of computer labs, level of Internet access, students' knowledge of technology and teachers' ability to integrate technology into classroom instruction. In monitoring additional counselor utilization, indicators for counseling services could be enhanced to include frequency of student interaction, professional development on issues specific to ELs, and other types of approaches to determine efficacy of additional counselors and counseling resources.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: In Section (E)(2) the applicant provides a framework for communication and engagement within the internal stakeholders within the ELA. The proposal would be strengthened by additional ideas for disseminating information monthly. Examples of increased information for stakeholders would be access to technology that provides instantaneous messages, social media, local cable access, district and school web pages, and auto calls.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: In Section (E)(3) performance measures were included for several subgroups, however, the data set was not aligned to the required subsets of the invitation. The district provided a narrative which detailed a strong philosophy of frequent assessment.		

Detailed tables aligned to the requirements and provided in the narrative would have strengthened this section of the proposal.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

In Section (E)(4) the applicant provides for a communication loop between key stakeholders. What remains unclear is how evaluation feedback from community stakeholders might be collected and disseminated. A detailed and structured adjustment mechanism, for example, a stage of steps that offered components of investigation, recommendation, discussion, action, and further monitoring and evaluation would enhance the project.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The budget in section (F)(1) appears to be very straightforward. There did not appear to be any travel money built in for attending conferences or for any contractual support by outside expertise. Also unclear were any state or other federal funds that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal. The budget narrative offered a rationale for sustainability after the end of the project, however, it may be unrealistic to assume there won't be a need for software upgrades and equipment replacement.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant indicates in Section (F)(2) that the pathway to sustainability lies within the new institutional knowledge with the teaching staff. The weakness of this type of sustainability plan is that sustainability is not feasible if there is high teacher turnover, a characteristic of the district noted in the Vision section of the proposal. This section of the proposal would be stronger if the applicant would address how this challenge to sustainability might be overcome. The plan for technology support sustainability will be to utilize local budget line items for technology. However, this logic may be undermined if such an increase in the number of computers requires additional software or apps, if technology becomes outdated, or must be replaced because it is worn out. Also noted is the plan to have teacher leaders take over some of the responsibilities within data teams to continue "rigorous data analysis." This strategy may also be expensive as additional duties require additional money for schedule overload or less instructional time available due to extra duties. These barriers to sustainability need to be addressed for a stronger section.		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	1
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: While the applicant did provide a list of 13 agencies that collaborate with the district, the how the agencies collaborate with the district was not evident in a detailed way. It was unclear how the needs and assets of the school and community were commingled to provide assistance, services, and improved the education and family supports. The project would have been a stronger contender with a description of how the district collaborates with <i>each</i> agency and how those services might be maximized with a project award. Collaboration between the school district and agencies to find ways to improve outcomes over time would also have enhanced the project. An example of how this collaboration might be written into future proposals would be to detail how the Family Outreach liaison might become a part of the enhanced school counselor efforts.		

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
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Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Absolutely Priority 1 <i>is met</i>, as a coherent plan to close the achievement gap for EIs is woven throughout the proposal. The project could be stronger with specific details on how the district will accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning, a good case for success is provided by: (1) four strong goals. (2) A good relationship with the state through a state school trustee, and (3) A cohesive infrastructure of administration and community support. The beginnings of a good proposal are apparent, however a more robust K-12 professional development plan, curriculum mapping K-12, a program model that highlights high quality sheltered instructional strategies for EIs, better coordination with local agencies for collaboration for innovative student support, and sustainability that is not vulnerable to teacher turnover would strengthen the project.</p>		
Total	210	115



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0444CA-2 for Greenfield Union Elementary School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The vision presented represents a coherent combination of research-based improvement strategies for grades 2-8: maximizing instructional time, developing human capital through extensive training, increasing differentiated instruction with coaching, using data to inform instruction, and creating a culture of high expectations for students and staff. With all district schools identified as persistently under-achieving, the vision of personalized learning portrayed in the proposal is appropriate for the participating schools and students and represents strong personalized learning support.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The response meets the requirements for this criterion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant identifies all schools as persistently under-achieving and all schools being selected to participate.</li> <li>• Participating schools meet the eligibility requirements and a list of schools is provided.</li> <li>• The total number of participating students and their subgroups, as defined in the notice, is provided.</li> </ul>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Since all schools are participating, a specific scale-up plan is not needed.</p> <p>In terms of a plan for meeting the applicant's outcome goals, while the proposal lists activities to be undertaken in the project and for some activities it describes who will lead them, it does not include the other required elements of a high-quality plan: i.e. key goals, timeline, deliverables, parties responsible for implementing the activities.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Since the proposal targets grades 2-8, it appropriately does not include goals for graduation rates or college enrollment rates.

The proposal does include ambitious yet achievable goals for improving performance on summative assessments (a 25% increase over five years). However, since it projects the same growth rates for all subgroups, it does not provide an ambitious yet achievable means to close specific achievement gaps (e.g. between English Language Learners and English-proficient students).

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant shows clear evidence that a student support and assessment/data analysis strategy implemented over the past several years has resulted in greater achievement gains at participating schools compared to non-participating schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With achievement gains at all schools, the applicant demonstrates that it has the capacity to effectively intervene in persistently low-performing schools. However, only two years of data were provided instead of four. Also the data provided did not address closing of achievement gaps.</li> <li>• Since all district schools are elementary schools, high school graduation and college enrollment rates do not apply.</li> <li>• Student performance data, through an online student tracing system (OARS) is clearly made available to students and educators on a frequent basis. However, the proposal does not describe if or how these data are made available to parents to the same extent.</li> <li>• The district also shows that its student support system has recently achieved success in reducing disciplinary incidents.</li> </ul>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant schools have site-based school councils consisting of parents and citizens. The councils have access to personnel salary data, but the proposal does not describe an actual system of site-based budgeting that would include non-personnel expenditures.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	3
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant district recently was subject to state oversight due to persistently low student achievement. The district regained autonomy for the 2012-13 school year. However, no information is provided about the state's legal, statutory and/or regulatory requirements in regard to district autonomy and whether any barriers to implementation exist.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	2
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal provides adequate evidence of an inclusive development process, but inadequate evidence of stakeholder support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal adequately describes the proposal development process as being inclusive of students, parents, teachers and administrators, including revisions made based on feedback to a rough draft initially developed by administrators.</li> <li>• However, although the proposal lists a teachers union leader and mentions union input into the proposal, it does not include evidence of support from the collective bargaining unit.</li> <li>• The union leader did not sign the application, and if the union does not engage in collective bargaining, no evidence is provided that a minimum of 70% of teachers support the proposal.</li> <li>• The proposal includes no letters of support from any stakeholders.</li> </ul>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal only describes gaps in relation to differences in achievement gains across schools, not across student groups. No high-quality plan for analyzing current status of achievement gaps is included (i.e. goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, responsible parties).

# C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan includes four key goals: mastery of reading skills, mastery of learning standards, personalized learning goals, and technology skills. Activities and responsible parties are described for attaining these goals, but not specific timelines or actual deliverables. Thus the response does not fully meet the criteria for a high-quality plan.</p> <p>The approach to learning as described indicates a good understanding of personalized learning environments and the related training, data analysis, instructional differentiation, and support systems that will be needed.</p> <p>Although the participating schools are elementary schools, the proposal includes beginning college-and-career readiness activities that would provide students with important skills (e.g. computer skills) to advance their opportunities in later grades.</p> <p>The proposal adequately describes a strategy to develop personalized learning goals and instruction, frequent assessment and feedback, and a student support system that would benefit high-need students.</p> <p>A proposed expansion of counseling support for students will ensure that they can productively use the resources provided.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	7
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes activities and responsible parties, but not specific timelines and deliverables; therefore the response does not fully meet the requirements for a high-quality plan.</p> <p>The proposal describes a vast array of professional development training that will take place, all of which is relevant to the requirements of this criterion; however, they are presented as a list and not a fully coherent staged plan. Whether teachers can absorb and effectively translate this amount of training into instructional improvements is questionable, especially if it is not packaged into manageable sequential components.</p> <p>The response focuses exclusively on professional development and does not address educator evaluations.</p> <p>The response includes no specific plan for increasing student access to effective/highly effective teachers, other than to generally rely on the available professional development trainings.</p>		

# D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	6
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application includes a well-detailed staffing plan to provide specific support for grant activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program improvement coordinator and differentiated learning coach at each school,</li> <li>• Technology support personnel,</li> <li>• College and career counselors at each school.</li> </ul> <p>While students will be assessed frequently, no mention is made of whether students demonstrating mastery can progress more quickly or whether alternate demonstrations of mastery will be allowed.</p> <p>Actual examples of LEA policies and rules to support the proposed approach are not provided.</p>		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: While the application indicates that students will have access to content, tools, resources and support personnel while in school, other components of this criterion are not addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to tools and content outside of school or for parents is not described;</li> <li>• Use of open data formats or interoperable data systems is not described.</li> <li>• Elements of a high-quality plan are not present (i.e., timelines, deliverables)</li> </ul>		

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The proposal provides a strong plan for collecting and using performance data, feedback, and program evaluation for continuous improvement of implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly teacher observation feedback</li> <li>• Frequent student assessment and feedback</li> <li>• Adjustments in personalized learning strategies</li> <li>• Input to principals from RTTD coordinators and differentiated instruction coaches</li> </ul> The continuous improvement strategy has strong potential to create a permanent system of measurement and feedback that can be maintained after the grant period.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: Strategies for internal stakeholder communication are strong: there is a formal meeting process established, progress reporting will occur at both district board meetings and school site council meetings. The application states that school council members communicate with other public stakeholders, but detail is lacking on whether there will be a specific RTTD external stakeholder communication strategy.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: The proposed performance measures do not meet all the requirements of this criterion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No non-cognitive growth indicator for PreK-3</li> <li>• No indicator of on-track to college and career readiness for 4-8</li> <li>• No health or social-emotional indicator for 4-8</li> </ul>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: Based on responses in other parts of the proposal, the applicant has strong strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development [see E(1)]. Plans are not as well-developed to evaluate and improve the use of technology resources. The proposal does not address compensation reform and modification of school schedules and structures.		

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>All proposed support for the project is from RTT-D grant funds.</p> <p>The grant funds are spread evenly across the four school projects. Why school-level projects with differing numbers of students and educators (up to a difference of 200 students) are getting the same funds is not explained.</p> <p>Funds are also distributed equally across years, although implementation will require investments in technology equipment and early training more heavily in the early years of the grant period.</p> <p>On-time investments are not specifically delineated.</p> <p>Expenditures are appropriate for the proposed grant activities.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal lacks some required elements of a high-quality plan: goals, timelines, and deliverables. It does include descriptions of activities and responsible personnel to sustain efforts beyond the grant period. However, support from state and local government leaders is not evident, and the listed mechanisms for continued support (having personnel take on extra duties, having the technology department absorb grant-funded costs) seem speculative as to whether they are feasible.</p>		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The response to the Competitive Preference Priority criteria is weak:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant has not formed a coherent and sustainable partnership with public or private organizations; it is requesting funds to begin this process.</li> <li>Although a variety of organizations are listed, and the districts claims to have “partnered” with these organizations, the nature of these partnerships is not described and no letters of support are provided from which this information might be derived.</li> <li>A GEAR UP federal grant partnership for college readiness with UC Santa Cruz is mentioned, but is not connected to any of the other potential partners listed.</li> <li>No specific population-level desired results are described.</li> </ul>		

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant indicates a good understanding of personalized learning environments and the training and support that would be needed to implement them.</p> <p>The proposal is aligned with college-and-career ready standards and has the potential to increase educator effectiveness and accelerate student achievement, as illustrated through current successes in raising student achievement with similar interventions and support.</p>		

The proposal is less strong in the areas of closing achievement gaps and expanding access to the most effective educators, but overall, the proposal meets Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	108
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0444CA-3 for Greenfield Union Elementary School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has expressed a clear vision for a project to provide more personalized learning for individual students. All participating schools are persistently under-achieving schools and the project strategies will assist in school turnaround. The proposed project also intends to provide services to stem the turnover of teachers from this small, rural district.</p> <p>The applicant currently has in use an online student data tracking system (OARS) and a separate online system that tracks student data from the weekly administration of the DIEBELS assessments. These systems assist teachers by providing information about which students needs additional support to master certain standards or skills. The additional funds available through RTTT-D will assist the district to improve the use of these systems.</p> <p>The LEA will be using standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace through the California adoption of the Common Core Standards and Assessments.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant will serve all schools in the district. These schools and the participating students satisfy the requirements of this competition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the schools are designated as persistently under-achieving;</li> <li>• The percentage of students in a school that come from low-income families ranges from 68% to 95% with an average of 81% for all schools combined; and</li> <li>• Just over 70% of the participating students have also been identified as high-needs.</li> </ul>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>All schools in the district will participate in the project so there is no scale-up need.</p> <p>The applicant has expressed a clear vision and activities for a project to provide more personalized learning to improve student learning outcomes for the participating students. The activities that will be implemented are based upon emerging practices that result in rapid achievement gains. The basis for personalized instruction will be a sound approach that involves the analysis of data to provide a continuously responsive system of tiered instruction.</p> <p>While the applicant has provided a set of activities that will be implemented the other elements of a high quality plan are not addressed:</p>		

- key goals,
- the timeline,
- the deliverables, and
- the specific parties responsible for implementing the activities.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

5

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The status goal information provided in the application indicates that the students in the LEA have shown improvement over the last two years. The goals that have been established for the four-project years and beyond are ambitious and appear to be achievable.

The achievement gap information that is provided is appropriate. The major subgroup in the district is English Learners and the achievement of that group is compared to English Only and Fluent English Proficient. The goals that have been provided do not appear to be ambitious. For example, in grade 5 English language arts the 2011-2012 gap was 42% and the goal for 2015-2016 is still 42%. As another example, in English language arts at grade 8 the gap for 2011-2012 was 40% and the proposal for 2015-2016 is 40%.

No information is provided to indicate how the district data and goals compare to State ESEA targets.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provided data on suspensions and police referrals from the middle school, and English Language Development test results and Academic Performance Index (API) results for all schools and the district as a whole. The data that were provided in the application was for only the last two years.</p> <p>The data did indicate that negative student behaviors were decreasing, and that measures of academic success were increasing. Because all schools are persistently under-achieving, we know that the district is having success in this category.</p> <p>It was not clear how the Annual Growth data that was provided is calculated and none of the information provided addressed progress in closing achievement gaps.</p> <p>The application discussed online systems that make some achievement data available to teachers and administrators but there was a lack of evidence of systems that make student performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides evidence that the district supports transparency in the area of school expenditures. Principal mechanisms for sharing personnel salaries and budget information are school site council meetings, the "School Accountability Report Card" and The "Single Plan for Student Achievement." It is not clear in the proposal whether the reporting of personnel salaries include aggregate data for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all school-level instructional staff and support staff;</li> <li>• for instructional staff only; and</li> <li>• for teachers only.</li> </ul>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	1
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA provided information that indicates that it has established a local capacity to increase productivity across the district. However,</p>		

there was insufficient information to demonstrate that the LEA is granted sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments that are required in this program.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

2

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application indicated limited evidence that students, parents, teachers, union leaders, and service providers provided input on a draft of the proposal and that their feedback helped inform the final proposal. The mayor and the California Department of Education were each provided opportunities to respond with comments. However, the proposal included no letters of support, no signature from a union president or any indication of a vote of support from teachers.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The application provided limited information about current efforts to implement personalized computer assisted learning at three schools. All three of these schools showed more rapid achievement gains as compared to the other district schools. However, the application did not include a high quality plan for an analysis of the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind the reform proposal contained within the applicant's proposal, including identified needs and gaps that the plan will address.

None of the elements of a high quality plan were evident:

- the key goals;
- activities to achieve the goals;
- the timeline for implementation of the activities;
- the deliverables that will result from the activities; and
- the parties responsible for implementing the activities.

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	9
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has proposed a sound set of activities to assist students set college and career goals. Through this process students should come to understand how what they are learning is key to success in achieving their goals. The proposed project also has a focus on helping students to master the California State Standards. California has adopted the Common Core standards so focusing on the California State Standards will help to ensure that students are college and career ready.</p> <p>The applicant has plans to use data to help design instruction to meet each students needs. Online systems will enable the applicant to track student progress but there is insufficient detail as to how the data will be used to develop a personalized learning plan for each student that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• involves the student in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest; and</li> <li>• provides access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen the student's learning.</li> </ul> <p>While the applicant will provide students with training in technology skills there is a lack of documentation about learning activities that will assist students to develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving . The application provided no evidence of mechanisms that will be in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.</p> <p>The proposal also lacks details about accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards.</p> <p>The proposal listed activities to be provided in four key areas. However, the proposal did not specify the following elements that are required of a high quality plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the key goals;</li> <li>• the timeline for implementation of the activities;</li> <li>• the deliverables that will result from the activities; and</li> </ul>		

- the parties responsible for implementing the activities.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

7

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application proposes teacher training targeted toward a variety of instructional strategies and standardized programs. In addition the proposed project will provide training in Professional Learning Communities which can assist the teachers to integrate all of the isolated training. The proposal did not address how the applicant will improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation systems.

The application also did not provide a plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas.

While the application contained several samples of data analysis protocols that the applicant plans to use these appeared to focus mainly on analyzing total class data rather than analyzing data for each individual student and using the results to adapt content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in individual tasks in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches.

Beyond a listing of general activities that will be implemented to deliver professional development, the application does not address the required elements of a high quality plan:

- The key goals;
- The timeline;
- The deliverables to result from the activities; and
- The parties responsible for implementing the activities.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	5
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application indicates that a Race to the Top director will be added to the district office staff to manage the grant activities. Additionally, project funds will support the addition of four positions at each site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Improvement Coordinator;</li> <li>• Differentiated Learning Coach;</li> <li>• Computer Assisted Learning Technology Support; and</li> <li>• College and Career Counselor.</li> </ul> <p>The application presents information that indicates that students will be allowed to progress through the standards at their own pace which will allow each student to work up to their full capability. While the application indicated that embedded assessments will be implemented it was unclear how students would be provided the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.</p> <p>The application lacked information about how the project would provide school leadership teams with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets.</p> <p>The application indicated that all participating students will be provided all of the necessary material to be successful. However, it is unclear how the learning resources will be adaptable to meet the needs of all students including students with disabilities and English learners.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

The application states that "All participating students will be provided all of the necessary material to be successful in the grant. These initiatives will be implemented during the regular school day to ensure equal access for all targeted students." This seems to reasonably ensure that all participating students regardless of income have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal. However, it does not provide sufficient information about how parents and educators regardless of income will have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal.

The proposal lacks detail about plans to ensure that students, parents and educators have appropriate levels of technical support. Also, the proposal provides no information about:

- Any information technology systems that will allow students and parents to export their information in an open data format; and
- Plans to ensure that the LEA and the participating schools use interoperable data systems.

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application presents a sound plan for a rigorous schedule of classroom observations and feedback to each teacher on a weekly basis. The results of these observations will also be productively used to inform staff development needs. The application also presents several strategies to publicly share information on the quality of the applicant's investments funded by Race to the Top – District.</p> <p>While these plans and strategies are sound, the proposal does not present a coordinated effort to comprehensively monitor progress toward project goals.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application presents appropriate strategies to share information on the quality of the applicant's investments funded by Race to the Top – District both to staff and to the public. Chief among the strategies is a feasible plan to discuss implementation effectiveness of RTTT-D funds at each school site council meeting. The site councils encompass parents, classified and certificated staff, and at the middle school, students.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal presents goals for three performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with a highly effective teacher and principal;</li> <li>• Grades 2-8 student performance on the California Standards Test for English Language Arts; and</li> <li>• Grades 2-8 student performance on the California Standards Test for Mathematics.</li> </ul> <p>The targets that have been established appear to be both ambitious and achievable.</p> <p>The applicant does not specify a sufficient number of performance measures.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application presents an informal and limited plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of the RTTT-District funds. For example, there is no plan to use formal goals as a basis for the evaluation and no use of a defined structure to guide site staff as they review student data, classroom visit reports, and personalized computer assisted reports. This concern also arises partly out of the lack of performance measures noted above.</p>		

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget that is provided indicates that all funds to support the project will be supplied by the grant. The budget has supplied a rationale for the allocation of the funds across the project. A main strategy in the budgeting is to support personnel that will build capacity that will continue to exist after the RTTT-D funding ends. This strategy appears appropriate.</p> <p>A concern about the budget is the \$800,000 to be used for the purchase of computers. This amount appears to be evenly spread over the four years of the project. Given the heavy emphasis in the project on the use of computer-assisted instruction, it would appear that the purchase of computers should be much more heavily loaded into the first project year.</p> <p>Also, the middle school population of participating students is 20-25% larger than the population in the elementary sites but the allocations for equipment and supplies is the same for all sites. Finally, the project budget does not include funds for travel which would seem to be required for travel to mandated RTTT-D meetings.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application indicates that the project will be sustainable after the project funding ends because the majority of the personnel funded by the grant will be used to develop teacher capacity that will enable teachers to provide high quality service to students after the funding ends. Plans are for the site budgets to continue to fund one academic coach per site and for the district to continue to provide technology support at a reduced level. This does not address what would appear to be a critical component--the College and Career Counselor.</p> <p>The applicant has not provided a high quality plan with the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the key goals;</li> <li>activities to achieve the goals;</li> <li>the timeline for implementation of the activities;</li> <li>the deliverables that will result from the activities;</li> <li>the parties responsible for implementing the activities; and</li> <li>support from state and local government leaders.</li> </ul>		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal has not provided adequate information about any formal partnerships with public or private organizations and no letters of support from such agencies have been provided. Additionally, no desired results that would be expected to result from such partnerships are included in the application.</p>		

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
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Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has expressed a clear vision for a project to provide more personalized learning for individual students. All participating schools are persistently under-achieving schools and the project strategies will assist in school turnaround. The proposed project also intends to provide services to stem the turnover of teachers from this small, rural district.</p> <p>The LEA will implement strategies through this grant to develop personalized education activities to meet the need of each individual student grades 2-8 through these categories of emerging practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Having an instruction and results-oriented principal who provides both individual and collective responsibility for the improved achievement of all students;</li><li>• Instruction specific teaming and teacher specific coaching;</li><li>• Well orchestrated systems of ongoing data collection and analysis that informs a continuously responsive and adaptive system of tiered instruction directly attentive to students' specific academic needs;</li><li>• Differentiated instruction by the systematic implementation of computer assisted learning;</li><li>• Increased professional development in high quality differentiated direct instruction; and</li><li>• Additional counseling resources to develop college awareness and goals.</li></ul>		
Total	210	106